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LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the statements concerning Iraq made by United States Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright at Georgetown University on 26 March 1997. These statements contain sophistries and distortions of fact and reflect a contempt for the provisions of the resolutions of the Security Council that we deem it appropriate to bring to the attention of the members of the Council.

1. Ms. Albright says, "We do not agree with those nations that say that if Iraq complies with its obligations relating to weapons of mass destruction then the sanctions must be lifted". This statement is contrary to the provisions of paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), in which the Council decides that "upon Council agreement that Iraq has completed all actions contemplated in paragraphs 8 to 13, the prohibitions against the import of commodities and products originating in Iraq and the prohibitions against financial transactions related thereto contained in resolution 661 (1990) shall have no further force or effect".

With this statement, Ms. Albright has frankly admitted the covert United States plan to exploit the machinery of Chapter VII of the Charter in order to settle accounts with Iraq. Ms. Albright is not content with that, but goes further in interpreting the resolutions of the Security Council and the extent of Iraq's compliance with them. She says that what is required is that Iraq should demonstrate its "peaceful intentions", and then she goes on to say that the Government of Iraq's intentions "will never be absolutely peaceful".

We leave it to the intelligence of the members of the Council to assess the seriousness of the logic on which Ms. Albright's inferences are based.

2. Ms. Albright frankly declared that her country would "continue to build a harmonious and united Iraqi opposition", and she said that "the Kurdish parties are working with us to reduce their differences and find common ground". Ms. Albright spoke at length of the kind of new regime she would like in Iraq.

Such a position is incompatible with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations as they relate to non-interference in the internal affairs of States, just as it is incompatible with the Security Council resolutions themselves, affirming as they do "the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq".

3. Ms. Albright said, "We have not had any differences at all with the people of Iraq, and the United Nations sanctions do not prevent the supply of food and medicine".

The reports of the United Nations and of many international humanitarian organizations contradict this statement, and the sanctions have caused the deaths of some 1 million Iraqis and are causing enormous suffering to Iraqi citizens. As for Ms. Albright's claim that she has no differences at all with the people of Iraq, we should like to remind her of an interview she gave to the CBS television network programme "60 Minutes" in May 1996. When the correspondent asked her, "Are the sanctions worth the price of the deaths of more than half a million Iraqi children?", Ms. Albright answered in an assured tone, "Yes, they are worth the price."

4. Ms. Albright stated that "The oil-for-food agreement is in effect, and it is designed to mitigate the suffering of civilians in all parts of Iraq".

First; this statement is an admission that Iraqi civilians are suffering because of the sanctions, a fact that Ms. Albright had previously denied. Secondly; the system is not, unfortunately, working as planned. Of the 359 contracts for food and medicine submitted to the Sanctions Committee up to 21 March 1997, only 62 have been approved and another 20 have been put on hold. The country that has caused these contracts to be put on hold is the United States. Moreover, the United States has delayed many of the proceedings in the Sanctions Committee, and this has caused one half of the term of the agreement to expire without any food or medicine reaching Iraq.

5. Ms. Albright has justified the deployment of United States forces in the region as "a precaution against further miscalculations on the part of Iraq". This United States argument is obviously absurd. The reason for the deployment of United States forces is to control the region and its resources and to usurp the will of its peoples. It is curious that Ms. Albright then falls into a sophistry when she says that "Iraq's military threat to its neighbours has diminished appreciably".

6. Ms. Albright's call warning the Security Council of the dangers Iraq poses to security in the region came at a time when the United States had used its veto twice in less than two weeks in order to prevent the Security Council from performing its duties with respect to the maintenance of peace and security in the same region in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This was in the context of the Council's consideration of Israel's construction of more settlements in the occupied Arab territories. It also came as, on 10 March 1997, the President of the United States was explaining the reasons for vetoing the draft resolution calling on Israel to halt construction on a

settlement in Arab Jerusalem by saying, "We have an established position to the effect that we can never achieve peace through Security Council resolutions".

This once again reveals the use of double standards in United States foreign policy and the fact that that policy places the interests of the United States and Israel above international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council.

7. The only thing Ms. Albright has been unable to deny is the progress that has been achieved by the Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency in the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991), which she has characterized as "sometimes amazing progress".

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative